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News Release

Durham Police Department

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Fraud/Scam Alerts

The Durham Police Department's Fraud Unit has received reports recently about two new scams.

One scam involves a caller telling a business employee that his/her manager has been arrested and the employee has been authorized to provide funds from the business to pay the manager's bond. The Police Department has received two reports of this scam in the past week.

The caller, who usually calls the business in the afternoon, identified himself as a police officer or sheriff's deputy. He told the employee that the manager has been arrested and the employee should take money from the cash register to pay the bond and give it to the suspect (in one case the suspect came to the business and in the second case he asked the employee to meet him at a convenience store). In both cases, the caller knew the manager's name and specific details about the business's operations.

The caller called from a blocked phone number that couldn't be traced. The suspect in both cases was described as a white male, possibly in his 30s, driving a silver/gray SUV, possibly a Buick or Chevrolet.

A police officer or deputy sheriff would not help a person make bond if he/she had just arrested the person. Legitimate officers do not ask people for money to post bonds.

The second scam is a phone scam involving an alleged Publishers Clearing House prize. The victim got a call from a restricted number and the caller told her she had won a check from Publishers Clearing House. The same caller called back the next day and told the victim she had also won a new Mercedes but she would have to pay taxes on the prizes before she could receive them. The caller told the victim she needed to go to Wal-Mart and purchase a Green Dot Visa card for \$175. He told her he would then meet her somewhere so she could give him the card and he would give her the prizes. The victim called the police and never met with the caller.

If you have any questions or think you have been the victim of a scam or fraud, please contact the Durham Police Department's Fraud Unit at (919) 560-4440.

Fraud crime prevention tips:

- Police and bank personnel should never ask you to take money out of your account or ask you to give them your secret ATM code.
- All law enforcement officers are required to carry photo identification cards. Ask to see the officer's credentials if there is any doubt you are dealing with a legitimate police officer. A real officer will not have a problem with presenting his or her credentials. If you don't feel comfortable asking for an officer's credentials, call 911. The 911 operator will be able to verify if there is a police officer at your location and, if not, can dispatch a patrol officer to your location to investigate it. Remember - a suspect can pose as anyone over the phone, including a police officer or a deputy.
- Do not enter a contest or accept free gifts or prizes unless you clearly understand all of your obligations.
- Never pay for something you did not order or do not want. Simply refuse to accept delivery or make payment.
- Be skeptical. If someone tells you that you've won a prize or contest you don't remember entering, it's probably a scam.
- Never give your personal information, such as your social security number or bank account number, to someone you don't know who calls you on the phone or sends you an email or letter.
- Never agree to wire money in order to claim a prize.
- Don't cash even legitimate looking checks that come with a letter telling you that you've won a sweepstakes or lottery
- Please report any fraudulent activity to your local law enforcement agency.